

PROCEDURE FOR ECMWF OPTIONAL PROGRAMMES

Adopted by the Council at its 73rd session (June 2010)

1. Introduction

In accordance with Article 11(3) of the Convention, *“An Optional Programme is a Programme proposed by a Member State or group of Member States in which all Member States participate apart from those that formally declare themselves to be non-participating States and which contributes to the purposes and objectives of the Centre.”*

It is understood that an Optional Programme is a possible vehicle for implementing activities of common interest to Member States, in line with Article 3 of the Convention, as long as such activities are fully financed and contribute to the purposes and objectives of the Centre. Co-operation with and contributions from the European Commission and/or agencies of the European Union, and/or intergovernmental organisations to an Optional Programme may be considered, when appropriate.

2. Approval procedure

The following approval procedure of Optional Programmes is required:

1. Any Member State or group of Member States may propose the establishment of an Optional Programme, based on a formal Programme Proposal prepared together with the Director-General (DG).
2. In order for an Optional Programme to be established, the Council, in considering the Programme Proposal, shall first satisfy itself that the proposed programme would contribute to the objectives of the Centre and that the Optional Programme can be fully financed.

The Programme Proposal should therefore include three parts:

- the first part listing the programme objectives, together with the technical and scientific content, the key deliverables, the initial duration and the timetable;
- the second part consisting of estimates of the Centre’s human and computer resources required;
- the third part documenting the financial and budgetary aspects, including, when appropriate, assumptions on co-operation with the European Commission, and/or agencies of the European Union, and/or intergovernmental organisations and their related funding commitments.

3. In accordance with the Convention, the establishment of an Optional Programme requires a double two-thirds majority vote by the Council.

4. Once the Council has approved the Programme Proposal, any Member State or Co-operating State that does not intend to take part in the programme shall, within three months, formally declare that it is not interested in participating therein.
5. The Optional Programme shall enter into force only when participants have committed the resources required for its implementation for the agreed duration.

3. Guiding principles for implementation

1. An Optional Programme shall be governed by the participating Member States, duly represented at Council for the purpose of the Optional Programme.
2. An Optional Programme may be combined with Third Party Activities in so far as it may complement a Third Party Activity.
3. An Optional Programme may involve co-operation with and contributions from the European Commission, and/or agencies of the European Union, and/or intergovernmental organisations, in the case of eligible activities of common interest.
4. Taking into account the effort involved in setting up such a programme, an Optional Programme should normally have an expected lifetime of at least three years.
5. Member States not participating in an Optional Programme must not be disadvantaged by the allocation of resources to the programme.
6. An Optional Programme must not restrict the Centre's core operational or research activities.
7. Computing resources for an Optional Programme will normally be provided from the allocations of the participating Member States.
8. The participants shall be responsible for providing the funding of human and any other necessary resources for an Optional Programme.
9. Involvement of Centre staff in an Optional Programme must be strictly limited to the level agreed under the Programme Proposal and funded by the participants.
10. A method of calculating contributions shall be established at the beginning of the programme by agreement between participants and shall be maintained throughout unless the participants agree unanimously that changes of circumstance require a modification of the scale that does not affect the overall resources available for implementing the programme.
11. In the specific case where a participating State would like to opt out of an Optional Programme, or participants would like to terminate an Optional Programme, Articles 6(1)(c) and 13(4) of the Convention apply, mutatis mutandis, unless agreed otherwise by the participating Member States.
12. Participating Member States decide on the acceptance of an application and on the modalities for a prospective new participant wishing to join an Optional Programme at a later stage.
13. All basic documents of the Centre as well as all Council decisions shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the execution of an Optional Programme.

14. The DG shall be responsible for the administrative and financial management of an Optional Programme.

15. The DG shall submit annually to the ECMWF Council for information a report on each Optional Programme. The report should include information on scientific, technical, administrative and financial aspects of the programme as appropriate.

16. Optional Programmes shall have separate headings on the revenue and expenditure sides of the budget. The revenue and expenditure shall be in balance; any difference shall be shown as loss or profit in order to balance the books. No transfer from one programme to another and/or from other articles of the budget shall be allowed.

17. An Optional Programme shall be financed through the source of revenue available to the specific programme and through the contributions of the participants.

18. Transactions for each programme shall be recorded under the relevant heading of the budget and shall be kept separate from transactions related to the Centre's budget referred to in Article 6(2)(b) of the Convention. Any deficit or surplus at the closure of the programme shall be accounted against (or in favour of) the participating States in proportion to their contributions.